

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

11 October 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

MIDDLE EAST

(Situation Report Number 24)

AS OF 1630 EDT

MORI/CDF per C03316187

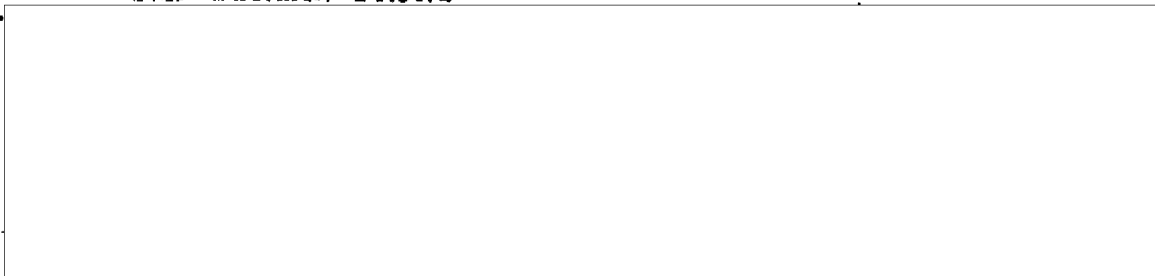
THE MILITARY SITUATION

2030 Z

GENERAL

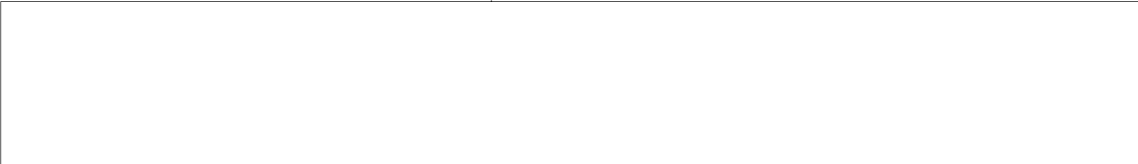
1. Israeli ground forces drove seven miles into Syria this afternoon under heavy air cover. The Israeli salient, about eight miles wide, is between Mount Herman and Qunaytirah in the northern Golan Heights. The Israeli planes are continuing to encounter heavy fire from Syrian surface-to-air missiles, but only intermittent attacks from Syrian fighters. The Israelis continue to hold the Egyptians along the canal front; no additional information is available on the armor battle reported south of Suez City earlier today, but Israeli fighters were noted in the area during the late afternoon. As of late today an Egyptian force of some 40,000 troops and 700 to 800 tanks are estimated to be on the east bank of the canal, according to the IDF. Not all of the tanks, however, are operational.

THE SYRIAN FRONT



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In an earlier press report, Defense Minister Dayan stated that Israeli forces "are moving on the road leading from Qunaytirah to Damascus." A UN observation post reported Syrian artillery fire in the area of the breakthrough had ceased.

3. Despite the Israeli claims, Damascus has acknowledged nothing and states only that its forces are "locked in fierce tank battles and artillery duels with the enemy."

4. Israeli aircraft were still reported conducting sorties over Syria in support of the ground fighting during the afternoon. Israeli planes attacked Syrian tanks in the vicinity of Harfa as a part of this strike. Harfa is in the northern sector of the Heights in the path of the reported Israeli breakthrough.

5. Israeli aircraft again attacked Damascus International Airport today, as well as seven other Syrian airfields nearby. Five Israeli planes were lost as a result of ground fire--believed to be SA-6 missiles. The Israelis believe the new SAM barrage may reflect Soviet deliveries made to Damascus on 10 October. Tel Aviv claims to have downed 11 more Syrian planes today.

6. An Israeli broadcast reports that Syrian soldiers who remained in the Golan Heights after their forces retreated across the cease-fire line are surrendering to Israeli units. According to the report, most of these troops are asking for food and water, suggesting a breakdown in Syrian supply services to the front.

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7. Several Soviet-built T-62 tanks have been captured as a result of the Israeli advances in the Golan area. A press report from Tel Aviv reports these are the first of their kind to fall into Israeli hands. The muzzle velocity on T-62 cannon provides longer range and better penetrations than the anti-tank shells on the previous T-55 models.

THE EGYPTIAN FRONT

8. Information on the ground war is limited to reporting from Israeli military sources who claim that the Egyptians have not broken through their forces or made significant advances into the Sinai. The Israeli strategy of containment continues to depend on heavy air support all along the front. Over 100 sorties were flown by late afternoon Tel Aviv time, including 20 in the area of Port Said.

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10. The Israelis claimed today that their commandos made successful harassing raids on the west bank of the canal and the Egyptian Suez Gulf coast. They say all of the commandos returned safely.

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11. The Israelis believe that Egyptian tank movement across the canal is abating. They estimate that some 40,000 Egyptian troops from five infantry divisions and approximately 700 to 800 tanks are now on the east bank. Some of the tanks, however, have been put out of action by the Israelis.

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12. The Israelis struck one Egyptian airfield south of Port Said today, but made no claims of having destroyed any Egyptian aircraft.

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SAUDI ARABIA

16. A Saudi brigade is reported moving into Jordan from Tabuk in northern Saudi Arabia tonight, augmenting the brigade already stationed in southern Jordan. The move will be felt as additional pressure for a Jordanian contribution to the war.

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MOROCCO

18. King Hassan announced last night that a second contingent of Moroccan troops is on its way to the war zone, this time to the Egyptian front. The US Defense Attache in Rabat has a report that over 1,000 Moroccan troops have already left for Egypt and another 2,000-3,000 are scheduled to depart soon.

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19. At the outbreak of hostilities, Morocco had between 2,000 and 3,000 troops, about 60 medium tanks, and some armored personnel carriers and support equipment stationed in Syria near the Golan Heights. A Moroccan Foreign Ministry official stated that Moroccan casualties in the Golan Heights have been very heavy, but he declined to give specific numbers.

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FEDAYEEN

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Some guerrilla units could be operating with Syrian forces in the Golan Heights and small commando groups are reported to have staged minor hit-and-run attacks from Lebanon across the Israeli border. The US Embassy in Beirut also cites some evidence to support its speculation that a guerrilla-fired Soviet ground-to-air missile may have downed an Israeli Phantom fighter attacking fedayeen positions in southern Lebanon. Figures in Western press reports-- apparently based on guerrilla press releases--to the effect that as many as 15-26,000 guerrillas are involved in the fighting appear vastly inflated.

21. Fedayeen press statements carried by western news agencies have particularly highlighted ostensible guerrilla raids and operations inside Israel, claiming that approximately 500 guerrillas are operating behind Israeli lines rocketing and shelling military and civilian targets.

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the US Consulate in Jerusalem reports that as of today it was unaware of any guerrilla activity on the West Bank.

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UNITED NATIONS

25X1: 23. The Security Council is tentatively scheduled to meet late this afternoon in a session which should hear from Abba Eban and Secretary-General Waldheim. Eban is expected to reply to Soviet and Arab charges of Israeli bombing civilian targets. Waldheim intends to appeal for an end to the fighting and express concern that continuation of the war will lead to broader international conflict. Waldheim is concerned that the Security Council appears to be doing nothing, but he feels that he cannot issue a cease-fire call without appearing to favor one side or the other. Consultations among Council members are still deadlocked over where a cease-fire line should be drawn. Although the British and Jordanians are exploring the possibility of a cease-fire in place, these efforts at compromise have found little support.

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USSR

25. Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko met with several Arab ambassadors--including those [redacted] today in Moscow to receive their thanks for Soviet support. Gromyko said Moscow will "exert all efforts" on behalf of a Middle Eastern peace that safeguards the security of all countries in the region.

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26. The Iraqi Foreign Minister made a sudden trip to the Soviet Union on 9 October and returned home yesterday. The Iraqis said he made the trip in accordance with the provision of the Iraqi-Soviet treaty calling for consultations on "important joint matters." He met with Soviet President Podgorny, who told him that the USSR is "firmly" on the Arab side. The Iraqis said they and the Soviets were "completely in agreement on all questions discussed."

27. Although there is no direct indication in the statement of the subjects discussed, it is a good bet that the Iraqis told the Soviets of their intention--made public yesterday--to join in the hostilities. It is also possible that they discussed questions related to Soviet logistical support of the Iraqis.

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CHINA

28. Chou En-lai met with the Syrian and Egyptian envoys in Peking today to give his personal blessing to their fight and to ask them to forward messages of support to their Presidents. The messages did not commit the Chinese to anything more than political backing of the Arabs.

AFRICAN REACTION

29. The reaction so far of the black African states to the outbreak of war in the Middle East has been one of general sympathy with and diplomatic support of the Arab cause. The Africans have neither the desire nor the means to give significant assistance to the Arabs, however. Rwanda and Dahomey broke relations with Tel Aviv after hostilities began, but most of the politically significant sub-Saharan countries still maintain diplomatic relations with Israel.

30. Diplomatic support is likely to be Africa's only contribution to the Arab cause at present--notwithstanding the offers of Uganda, Burundi, and Somalia to give materiel and troops. Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Liberia, Tanzania and Zambia still have diplomatic relations with Israel. Most seem to be sitting on the fence.

SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRATION

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32. Many of the Jewish emigrants who left this week probably obtained exit documentation prior to the outbreak of hostilities. They were not stopped at the border, but the US Embassy, noting that the Soviets are caught between Arab and US opinion on this issue, doubts Moscow will permit the flow of emigrants to continue at the recent high level if the war does not taper off soon.

LATE ITEMS

33. According to the US Attache in Tel Aviv, the Egyptian force attempting to drive south along the Sinai coast today was successfully repelled by Israeli units. This is the second Egyptian attack along this line in two days.

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36. The ships could also be used to carry personnel or equipment. Each Alligator class-ship can carry up to 26 armored vehicles, nine trucks, and some 500 naval infantry troops. The Polnochy-class ships can each lift about five tanks and associated troops.